

their male counterparts. In 1999, women on Medicare were projected to spend \$430 a year on medications, compared to \$380 for men.

Women are expected to make up a greater share (58 percent) of beneficiaries with high (\$500–\$999) or very high (\$1,000) annual out-of-pocket drug costs in 1999.

Women make up more than six in ten (61.4 percent) Medicare beneficiaries with hypertension and women with hypertension have higher overall out-of-pocket spending for prescription drugs (\$800) than men do (\$694).

OWL shares the disturbing fact that Medicare beneficiaries without drug coverage are less likely to receive drug therapies compared to those with coverage. In 1996, women without coverage used 24 percent fewer prescriptions than did women with coverage.

I agree with the conclusions in the OWL report that these numbers cry out for the inclusion of a prescription drug benefit in Medicare.

I will now read the letter from Julia Kanopsky:

I was so thrilled to find your address I was allowed to express myself on [the] high price of prescriptions. I am one of the least fortunate ones who does not have any . . . health care . . . [I have a] pension [and] when I pay for my three prescriptions for heart and blood pressure, and 2 for pain, pay for my Blue Cross, half of my check is used up and every time you get a refill on prescription drugs, the price differs. Blue Cross [also] goes up. I [have] talked to so many seniors like myself and it has us worried to death. I just wish the government would take an interest in different problems like this, to curb like prices. I eat two meals a day . . . any more hike in health cost, I'll have to go to one meal. [I get] a little Social Security raise, and then . . . property tax and utilities go up. I just can't win. Voice your opinion, Debbie! Maybe someone will listen. Thank you, Julia Kanopsky. P.S. I'm too old to get a job if I were younger, maybe [I would]. I could pick up a job to at least pay for prescriptions for Healthcare. I'm trying to maintain my home and being independent, these prices are scaring me.

The time is now to enact legislation that will reduce the price for prescription drugs for seniors and that will include a prescription drug benefit in the Medicare program.

HOUSE BIPARTISAN VOTE ON THE ESTATE TAX IS A VICTORY FOR TAXPAYERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Committee on Ways and Means, I want to celebrate today's victory on behalf of the taxpayers. That is the outstanding vote produced by this bipartisan Congress, 279 to 136. Sixty-five Democrats joined the Republican majority in signalling to America and to taxpayers everywhere that we think it is punitive when a person dies after working all their life to increase wealth, to increase opportunities for their family, that the government now becomes their partner; the government becomes, if you will, the primary recipient of all that person's hard work.

Growing up in this country, my parents told me, work hard, strive for the

greatest heights, and you will be richly rewarded for your efforts. America, home of entrepreneurs and opportunity everywhere, signals to people, come one, come all, from around the world to this great Nation. We are in fact a home of opportunity.

Many people agreed with us today, and thankfully many people, everyone from the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN), joined. The list is endless of people from virtually every State who joined in recognizing the egregious nature of the estate tax or death tax, as we call it.

The calls on the House floor, today, though would indicate otherwise. In fact, the minority portrayed this as simply a Republican bill rammed through this process with no debate and no consideration. Death taxes have been on the books since 1913, so I do not think we got to this point in time quickly. In fact, I think we have been waiting for this a long time.

I think the voters of the minority Democrat party in fact enjoyed the bill today and supported the bill today, and in fact, we are just within the threshold of a veto-proof number in this Chamber.

While we are on the subject of bipartisanship, I think it is important to not only compliment those, and the numbers and names can be found probably in many newspapers around the country, the 65 brave hearts that stood up and recognized the estate tax is patently unfair. But let us talk about the tactics being used by the minority party this week in fact as it relates to getting bills passed on behalf of the citizens of the country.

The front page of the Roll Call newspaper on the Hill said, "Wyden Lands in Hot Water." That is Senator WYDEN, a Democrat from Oregon. "Bipartisanship may cost the Oregonian a finance panel seat."

It goes on to say that, "Senator Ron Wyden may have won plaudits from the New York Times editorial page for trying to reach across party lines to craft a Medicare prescription drug reform plan, but the move infuriated many of his Democratic colleagues. Several Democrat sources says Wyden has now dashed any hope of landing one of the three coveted seats opening at the end of the year on the powerful Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction over entitlement and tax policy."

That is amazing, that in a day when we have had dialogue about a lack of bipartisanship, we read that headline, that one of their own reached out to the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Health of the Committee on Ways and Means, to try and craft a proposal that would actually pass, that would actually ensure prescription drug coverage for our seniors, prescription drug coverage that is vitally necessary for our seniors throughout America.

A brave soul, a Democratic Senator, decided it was more important to start

to reach out to help our constituents, rather than score political points.

It goes on to talk about how he gave Republicans ground to stand on, and what have you. Let me just suggest, Mr. Speaker, the problems we are facing in this country are great. The problems we are facing as it relates to policy are important. I applaud Senator WYDEN, and I know I am probably stretching by referring to people by name, but I want to thank him for at least reaching out to try and find some common ground.

We have a lot of issues. The Patients' Bill of Rights, I will alert many of my colleagues as a Republican, I am a proud sponsor and supporter of that bill. That does not bring my party any great happiness, because they don't like when some of us are off the reservation, but nevertheless, I support it.

Campaign finance reform is another issue I take a great deal of pride in supporting.

I think there are a number of issues we can resolve on this floor, in this Chamber, relative to the needs of Americans. But I do think it is good that this is a time when bipartisanship is finally starting to reach through the cacaphony, right now, again, 65 Democratic yea votes on the bill today to eliminate death taxes, and that now maybe we can move on to other important aspects of public policy.

Let us go ahead and try to bring the Patients' Bill of Rights to fruition. Let us try and bring prescription drug coverage to fruition. Let us meet on the educational needs of our children around America, rather than just talk about it for campaign purposes. Let us make certain that every American is benefited by the debate and the dialogue here on the floor, that ultimately it is not about who runs this place.

God forbid we have that kind of fight. Let us not worry about who is in charge next year. Let us do something on behalf of the people. We have a chance. We can do it.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind all Members to refrain from personal references to individual Senators.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TODAY'S VOTE ON THE ESTATE TAX

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, might I take just a moment to add my appreciation and congratulations to this first class of Pages of the millennium. Clearly, the eloquence of the words said by my colleagues cannot be matched in the short period of time that I have to simply say thank you, thank you, thank you.